



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUN 25 1999

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: OSWER Response to OIG Final Report, "EPA Controls Over RCRA Permit Renewals" (Report no. E1DSF9-11-0002-9100115)

FROM: Timothy Fields, Jr. *Timothy Fields, Jr.*
Acting Assistant Administrator

TO: Michael Simmons
Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Internal Audits
Office of Inspector General

The EPA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) examined RCRA permit renewals and recently suggested that OSW:

1. "Issue a guidance memorandum for management of RCRA permit renewals to EPA regions and the states that addresses:
 - the value of Federal oversight;
 - the oversight responsibilities of Headquarters and regions; and
 - the growing importance of permit renewals."
2. "Ensure that EPA regions and/or the states:
 - enter key permitting data in RCRIS which include at a minimum:
 - the date the permit application (part B) was received;
 - the date the permit was issued;
 - the date the permit expires; and
 - use the data to ensure that facilities are not allowed to operate under permits that have expired or been improperly renewed."

The OIG shared early drafts of the report with us. We agree to implement the report's recommendations. We are in the process of drafting a guidance memorandum to the RCRA Senior Policy Advisors in the Regions that addresses the recommendations of the OIG report. We expect to issue the guidance by the end of July. In addition, we discussed the OIG findings with the Regions at two conference calls held in May: the monthly Permit Writers call and the bimonthly RCRA Senior Policy Advisors call. During these calls, we emphasized the

importance of knowing the status of permit renewals at the Regional level.

In the Permit Writers call, we had a discussion with the Regions on ways to track permitting information and ensure that permits are not unintentionally allowed to lapse. We will use this input to formulate the portion of the guidance that deals with tracking. We believe that there may be ways to accomplish this tracking through approaches or systems other than RCRIS, and we are leaning towards allowing flexibility in the way Regions track renewals.

Concurrently with issuing the permit renewal guidance, we will incorporate discussion of permit renewals into the FY2000 Beginning of Year Plan (BYP) guidance. OSW plans to hold discussions with each of the Regions on the status of Regional tracking approaches and permit renewals during the FY2000 BYP calls.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this report. If you have any questions about this memorandum, please contact Carrie Hawkins, of my staff, at 202-260-0137.

cc: Anne Andrews
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Carol Jacobson
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